

REMARKS

Foreign Priority:

Applicant thanks the Examiner for acknowledging Applicant's claim to foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d), and for confirming that the certified copy of the priority document has been received at the Patent Office.

Drawings:

Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating that the drawings filed June 30, 2000 have been approved.

Allowable Subject Matter:

Applicant sincerely thanks the Examiner for indicating that claims 20-24 have been allowed. Further, Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating that although claims 2, 3, 11 and 12 have been objected to these claims would be allowable if written in independent form.

Accordingly, Applicant has re-written both claims 2 and 11 in independent form. Further, Applicant has amended some of the remaining claims to correct the dependence of these claims.

Further, Applicant notes that the above referenced claim amendments to claims 2 and 11 have been made to merely draft these claims in independent form, are not intended to narrow the scope or spirit of the claims, in any way.

Withdrawn Claim:

Applicant notes that claim 4 has been canceled from the present application.

Claim Rejections:

Claims 2-3 and 5-7, 9-15, 17 and 19-24 are all of the claims that have been examined in the present application, and currently only claims 5-7, 9-10, 13-15, 17 and 19 stand rejected.

35 U.S.C. § 102(e) Rejection - Claims 13, 14, 15 and 17:

Claims 13, 14, 15 and 17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,530,411 to Tsukagoshi et al.

However, Applicant notes that claim 17 has been canceled and claim 11 has been written in independent form. As indicated above, this claim is now in allowable condition.

Additionally, Applicant submits herewith certified English translations of the Japanese Priority documents of the present application (i.e. JP 11-189126, 2000-004348 and 2000-005637). Therefore, Applicant submits that the '411 patent is no longer prior art under 35 U.S.C. § 102.

35 U.S.C. § 103(a) Rejection - Claims 5 and 6:

Claims 5 and 6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tsukagoshi in view of Japanese Ref. No. 52-75702 to Miyoshi. However, in view of the foregoing, Applicant submits that these claims are also in allowable condition.

35 U.S.C. § 103(a) Rejection - Claim 7:

Claim 7 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tsukagoshi in view of Admitted Prior Art (i.e. Applicant's Amendment filed May 29, 2002). However, in view of the foregoing, Applicant submits that this claim is also in allowable condition.

35 U.S.C. § 103(a) Rejection - Claims 9, 10 and 19:

Claims 9, 10 and 19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tsukagoshi in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,029,627 to Ochiai. However, in view of the foregoing, Applicant submits that these claims are also in allowable condition.

35 U.S.C. § 103(a) Rejection - Claims 13-15, 17 and 19:

Claims 13-15, 17 and 19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over GB 1,000,113 to Powell in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,109,320 to Miyazaki et al. and optionally in view of the Admitted Prior Art in Figure 1. However, in view of the foregoing, Applicant submits that these claims are also in allowable condition.

35 U.S.C. § 103(a) Rejection - Claims 5 and 6:

Claims 5 and 6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Powell in view of Miyazaka and/or Figure 1 of the present application, and in further view of the Japanese Document No. 52-75702 to Miyoshi et al. However, in view of the foregoing, Applicant submits that these claims are also in allowable condition.

35 U.S.C. § 103(a) Rejection - Claim 7:

Claim 7 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Powell in view Miyazaki and/or Figure 1 of the present application, in further view of the admissions made

in the Amendment filed on May 29, 2002. However, in view of the foregoing, Applicant submits that this claim is also in allowable condition.

35 U.S.C. § 103(a) Rejection - Claims 9 and 10:

Claims 9 and 10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Powell in view of Miyazaki and/or Figure 1 of the present application, in further view of Ochiai. However, in view of the foregoing, Applicant submits that these claims are also in allowable condition.

Conclusion:

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

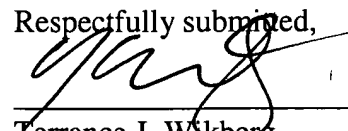
SUGHRUE MION, PLLC
Telephone: (202) 293-7060
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860

WASHINGTON OFFICE

23373

CUSTOMER NUMBER

Respectfully submitted,


Terrance J. Wikberg
Registration No. 47,177

Date: April 26, 2004